

CASE STUDY

LOS GATOS CREEK TRAIL Reach 4A/5

A 1.0 mile trail links neighborhoods to downtown and offers access to nature and recreation within busy Silicon Valley



The Los Gatos Creek Trail (Reach 4 – Lonus Street to Auzerais Avenue) project links the Willow Glen Neighborhood to Downtown San Jose.

Trail construction was completed in October 2007.

The trail commences at Lonus Street, just two blocks from stores and restaurants along Willow Glen's Lincoln Avenue. The paved trail follows the creek to the Gregory Street Pedestrian Bridge leading visitors to the Palm Haven neighborhood with its towering hundred-year old palms. Back on the trail, trail users travel beneath Highway 280 in order to reach Auzerais Avenue. Along the way, trail users can make use of a fitness par-course and view a future park site that will include references to the city's historical canning district.

The trail's visual presence is reinforced by a stone gateway at Auzerais Avenue that reflects the Arts-

and-Crafts style of nearby bungalow homes and adds to the community's sense of place.

From Auzerais Avenue, trails users have two options, 1) follow the quiet neighborhood street for several blocks eastward in order to reach San Jose's 250-acre Guadalupe River Park, or 2) remain on the trail to reach San Carlos Street.

A master plan approved by the City Council in June 2008 defines a future under-crossing and construction of an additional mile of trail in order to connect to the Guadalupe River Park and its trails.

Development of trail projects like Reach 4 and 5a, are bringing the City closer to its goal of a 100-mile Trail Network by 2022, as defined by Goal 10 of the city's Green Vision. Development of the trail network is identified as a key objective as the City



San José Trail Program
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seeks to become the epicenter of the Clean Tech Economy.

The new trail improvements resolve issues with early trail development efforts along this alignment. In the mid-1990's, the City had conditioned a private developer (rental storage) to construct trail along its creek side frontage. The short trail received little use because it was not connected to a larger system and had only one point of entry.

A \$200,000 Recreational Trail Program grant secured by the City in 1999 supported further development that would lead to interconnectivity and greater usage. These grant funds supported early planning work and were leveraged to secure the additional funds from local and state sources over the next 8 years. The project's final price tag was \$4,321,430. The cost per mile is extremely high but also serves to quantify the complexity of the project developed within an urban area.

The Los Gatos Creek Trail project has been one of the most complicated projects undertaken by the City to date. City staff worked for 10 years to address environmental issues, property acquisition, inter-agency coordination and so many other challenges in order to deliver this great project. Funding was also a

complex task because it required management of a variety of funding sources with defined purposes, deadlines and guidelines.

Working within one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, along a constrained waterway and adjacent to a state highway made development very challenging. It is remarkable how portions of the short trail feel so remote when a person considers that the city had to secure recreational access beneath Highway 280, mitigate for lost plant material on the site, secure easements from the San Jose Water Company and Pacific Gas and Electric, and acquire land from three property owners.

The project adds a much needed park-like amenity within the Burbank-Del Monte Neighborhood, an area once defined as blighted. Today it is rapidly transitioning from declining industrial uses to a transit and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood in the mid-town area of San Jose.

Future further development of the Los Gatos Creek Trail system will permit trail users to travel along the south bay's most popular trail system to reach the city's longest trail system (Guadalupe River Trail).

Left Photo:
Traveling beneath Highway 280 enjoying views of the creek.

Right Photo:
Grand opening of the trail late in 2007, officials from San Jose, County of Santa Clara, Santa Clara Valley Water District and Neighborhood Associations celebrated.



Gregory Street Bridge





“The new Reach 4 section of the Los Gatos Creek Trail greatly contributes to our community’s quality of life. Local residents now have an easily accessible trail that ties our neighborhoods together and provides a connection with nature and a means to healthy living that is so often lacking in urban areas.”
- County Supervisor Ken Yeager.



“The completion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail Project is an example worthy of emulation for future development of San Jose’s trail system. Resources and collaboration from the city, state, federal agencies and various community groups have led to this trail; a gift not only for us, but for future generations to come.”

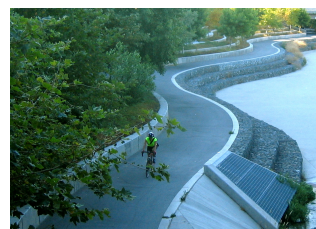
- City Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio



Two blocks from Willow Glen’s Lincoln Avenue, with shopping, restaurants and entertainment



Cross over the Gregory Street, and enjoy turn of the century architecture in Palm Haven



Bike four blocks along quiet Auzeris Avenue, and discover the 250-acre Guadalupe River Park



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